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THE PRESIDENT'S INTELLIGENCE CHECKLIST--26 JANUARY 1962

1. LAOS: MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS:

A. AN ENEMY FORCE, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE NORTH VIETNAMESE BATTALION, HAS OUTFLANKED GOVERNMENT TROOPS DEFENDING NAM THA, A MAJOR BASE IN NORTHWEST LAOS, AND HAS REACHED A POINT A FEW MILES SOUTH OF THE TOWN.

B. THE THREAT TO NAM THA MAY BE A RESPONSE TO PHOUMI'S EFFORTS LAST MONTH TO CAPTURE THE ENEMY BASE AT MUONG SAI, SOUTHEAST OF NAM THA. GOVERNMENT FORCES IN THIS AREA HAVE BEEN PUSHED BACK IN TWO OTHER ACTIONS IN JANUARY.

C. WE CANNOT SAY YET WHETHER THE ATTACK ON NAM THA WILL BE PRESSED HOME, BUT WE SEE SOME POSSIBILITY THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE DECIDED PHOUMI CAN BE MADE MORE TRACTABLE WITHOUT GREATLY INCREASING THE RISK TO THEM. WE NOTE ALSO THAT CHINESE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IS STRONGEST IN THIS AREA, AND DO NOT RULE OUT A SPECULATION THAT THE CHINESE MAY HAVE DECIDED TO UPSET THE APPLE CART.

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D. [REDACTED] VIET MINH STRENGTH IN LAOS AT ABOUT 9,000: 10 INFANTRY BATTALIONS TOTALLING 5,000 MEN, PLUS 2,000 ASSIGNED AS STIFFENERS TO PATHET LAO UNITS AND 2,000 IN HEADQUARTERS AND SUPPORT UNITS. THE CHANGE (UP FROM 5,100) [REDACTED]

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2. LAOS: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

A. PHOUMI TOLD AN AMERICAN OFFICIAL YESTERDAY THAT "HIS COLLEAGUES" ARE ADAMANT ON THE DEFENSE AND INTERIOR CABINET POSTS AND THAT THE KING SUPPORTS HIM.

B. HE PLANS TO SEND A NONCOMMITTAL MESSAGE TO SOUVANNA TODAY OR TOMORROW, SAYING HE WILL DISCUSS ISSUES WITH HIM IN LUANG PRABANG, BUT SAID THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF MEETING THERE AS EARLY AS THE 29TH, SINCE DETAILS SUCH AS SECURITY HAVE TO BE ARRANGED.

C. PHOUMI AGAIN CLAIMED HE DID NOT KNOW WHERE THE US STOOD, AS "WE THREATENED TO WITHDRAW SUPPORT BUT CONTINUED TO GIVE IT."

D. PHOUMI DENIED RECEIVING ANY CHANGE OF ADVICE FROM SARIT SINCE THE LATTER TOLD HIM TO MAINTAIN HIS POSITION IN BANGKOK LAST SUNDAY.

3. CHIANG EXPECTS OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE AGAINST THE MAINLAND THIS YEAR:

AMBASSADOR DRUMRIGHT BELIEVES CHIANG IS CONVINCED THAT DETERIORATION OF THE COMMUNIST ECONOMY AND OF POPULAR MORALE WILL MAKE THIS THE MOST FAVORABLE TIME FOR ACTION. PREPARATIONS FOR MAINLAND OPERATIONS BEGUN LAST SUMMER SLACKED OFF IN THE FALL, BUT THE PACE HAS PICKED UP AGAIN RECENTLY. DRUMRIGHT EXPECTS ANOTHER APPROACH FOR US SUPPORT OR FOR GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION SOON.

4. SOVIET LIAISON OFFICER IN TIRANA FLIES HOME:

WE THINK HIS DEPARTURE SIGNALS THAT ALBANIA IS NO LONGER IN THE WARSAW PACT, BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH SIDE SUCCEEDED IN PROVOKING THE OTHER INTO TAKING THE INITIATIVE.

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5. PUNTA DEL ESTE SIDELIGHTS:

A. EMBASSY QUITO SEES A POSSIBILITY THAT CUBA MIGHT PROPOSE THAT THE CONFERENCE NULLIFY THE 1942 RIO PROTOCOL SETTING THE ECUADOR-PERU BOUNDARY. THE EMBASSY FEARS THAT CUBAN INVOCATIONS OF THIS EMOTIONAL ISSUE AS ECUADOR'S "ONLY FRIEND" WOULD MAKE IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR ECUADOR TO VOTE AGAINST CUBA.

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D. THE BRAZILIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN EXTREMELY BUSY SELLING THE BRAZILIAN POSITION TO THE US PRESS.

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6. REACTIONS TO SOVIET MEMORANDUM TO WEST GERMANY:

A. ULBRICHT IS CLEARLY UNHAPPY ON KHRUSHCHEV'S APPROACH, AND IS HAVING DIFFICULTY TONING DOWN HIS HARSH LINE TO GET IN STEP.

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7. CONGO:

A. THE SITUATION IN KATANGA REMAINS STUCK ON DEAD CENTER. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE GROUP OF MERCENARIES DISMISSED BY TSHOMBE WERE PLOTTING AGAINST HIM; WE DO NOT INTERPRET THEIR DEPARTURE AS AN INDICATION THAT HE IS GIVING IN.

B. THE USSR HAS ASKED FOR AN IMMEDIATE UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON THE CONGO. AMBASSADOR STEVENSON EXPECTS THEM TO ATTACK U THANT.

C. THE UN HAS RECAPTURED THE GIZENGIST COLONEL PAKASSA AND MAY CHARGE HIM WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MASSACRE OF STATIONS AT KINDU LAST NOVEMBER.

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8. NOTES:

BOURGUIBA HAS

ANNOUNCED THE SUSPENSION OF NEGOTIATIONS ON BIZERTE "TO FACILITATE
SETTLEMENT OF THE ALGERIAN PROBLEM, WHICH APPEARS IMMINENT." 50X1

B. [] PAKISTAN [] TAKE NO 50X1

FURTHER ACTION ON KASHMIR PENDING AN INDIAN REPLY ON THE BLACK MISSION,

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C. KHRUSHCHEV IS BACK IN MOSCOW.

D. WE HAVE NOTED SIGNS OF SOME SORT OF UNUSUAL SOVIET NAVAL
OPERATIONS IN THE WESTERN ARCTIC. [] 50X1

E. THE CHINESE ARE HAVING SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WITH DISSATISFIED
FOREIGN STUDENTS. [] 50X1

F. AMBASSADOR ELLRIDE SAYS PORTUGAL IS "VERY DEFINITELY" RELATING
OUR UN VOTE ON ANGOLA TO THE AZORES BASE RENEGOTIATION.

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I. THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO CONTROL THE VIOLENCE OF THE LAST FEW DAYS--WHICH HAS NOW SUBSIDED--HAS STIRRED UP CONSIDERABLE DISSATISFACTION AMONG CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERS.

J. THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED MARTIAL LAW FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF THE CHIEF OF YDIGORAS' SECURITY FORCE. WE SEE NO INDICATION THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS IMMEDIATELY THREATENED.